

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

- 1 1. A method of relieving stress in a fabric, comprising the steps of:
  - 2 providing a fabric having at least three layers;
  - 3 feeding the fabric along a pathway;
  - 4 applying a tension to the fabric in a direction substantially
  - 5 perpendicular to the pathway;
  - 6 heating the fabric; and
  - 7 removing the tension from the fabric in the direction substantially
  - 8 perpendicular to the pathway.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein a tentering frame is used for
  - 2 applying tension to the fabric in the direction substantially perpendicular
  - 3 to the pathway.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the steps of:
  - 2 before heating, applying a tension to the fabric in a direction
  - 3 substantially parallel to the pathway; and
  - 4 after heating, removing the tension from the fabric in the direction
  - 5 substantially perpendicular to the pathway.
- 1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the fabric comprises a window
  - 2 covering including first and second sheets of material coupled to each
  - 3 other by a plurality of vanes.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein each side of the tentering frame  
2 contacts the respective substantially opposite edges of the first and  
3 second sheets of sheer material.

1 6. The method of claim 3, wherein a nip system is used for applying  
2 the tension to the window covering in the direction substantially parallel  
3 to the pathway.

1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the nip system includes a plurality  
2 of nips along the pathway for contacting the window covering.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of carrying the  
2 window covering along the pathway with a drive belt assembly.

1 9. A system for relieving stress in a three-dimensional window  
2 covering, comprising:

3 a tentering frame for applying tension to a three-dimensional  
4 window covering in a first direction; and

5 a plurality of heating elements located along the tentering frame for  
6 heating the window covering,

7 wherein the tentering frame carries the window covering while  
8 under tension in the first direction along a pathway adjacent to the  
9 heating elements.

1 10. The system of claim 9, further comprising a plurality of nip units  
2 along the pathway for applying tension to the window covering in a  
3 second direction.

1 15. The system of claim 9, further comprising a conveyor belt along the  
2 pathway adjacent to the heating elements for carrying the window  
3 covering across the platen.

1 16. A method of relieving stress in a three-dimensional fabric,  
2 comprising the steps of:  
3 providing a three-dimensional fabric comprises multiple materials;  
4 feeding the fabric along a pathway;  
5 tensioning the fabric in a first direction;  
6 applying heat to the fabric as the fabric travels along the pathway;  
7 and  
8 removing the tension from the fabric in the first direction.

1 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising the steps of:  
2 tensioning the fabric in a second direction substantially  
3 perpendicular to the first direction; and  
4 removing the tension from the fabric in the second direction.

1 18. The method of claim 16, wherein a tentering frame along the  
2 pathway is used for tensioning the fabric in the first direction.

1 19. The method of claim 17, wherein a plurality of nip units along the  
2 pathway are used for tensioning the fabric in the second direction.

1 20. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of carrying the  
2 fabric via a conveyor belt along at least a portion of the pathway.